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AUTHOR Rodriguez-Brown, Flora V.; Elias-Olivares, Lucia
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INSTITUTION InterAmerica Research Associates, Rosslyn, Va.
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines: (1) the use of questions by children at different levels of proficiency in Spanish and English, and (2) the congruency between the language constructs used to measure language proficiency and the natural language repertoire of children as seen in video-tapes of classroom interaction. A quantitative analysis of the data collected on question repertoire indicates that, in general, questions occur more often in the language in which the children are more proficient. The results show no significant difference in the number of questions asked by each child. Discussing measures of language proficiency, it is concluded that a test that measures more than one aspect of language competence is a better predictor of the speaker's communicative competence than one which is limited to a single aspect of that competence. In addition, the paper concludes that tests currently used to measure language proficiency examine aspects of language use that are irrelevant to children's linguistic performance and fail to take into account most of the richness of the children's language repertoire. New test constructs for measuring language proficiency that are more holistic in nature and that are based on what children actually do with language need to be developed. (JK)

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LINGUISTIC REPERTOIRES, COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE
AND THE HISPANIC CHILD

Flora Rodríguez-Brown and Lucía Elías-Olivares*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Studies dealing with the languages used by bilingual children have generally focused exclusively on the individual speaker, and his/her capacity to form and comprehend sentences in the standard variety of one of the two languages (Lance 1975, González 1970). Language behavior in specific speech situations within a speech community has been the concern of more recent studies which have examined bilingual speech from a different perspective (McClure 1977, Poplack 1978, Zentella 1978). These studies have taken as a starting point the speech community as a whole and have examined the structure of the total range of styles available to the speakers through the use of sociolinguistic and ethnographic methodologies. Basic concepts such as speech community, speech event, speech act, verbal repertoire and communicative competence underline all these research projects and are fundamental to our understanding of how language is used in different settings (Hymes 1974, Blom and Gumperz 1972, Gumperz 1964). The totality of the linguistic varieties -- dialects, styles, registers or languages -- available to members of a speech community -- the home, the neighborhood, the school -- constitute their linguistic or verbal repertoire. In effect, several studies have demonstrated that there are no single style speakers and that most speakers move along a continuum of linguistic varieties whose selection depends on sociolinguistic factors such as types of speech events, attitudes towards varieties, formality or informality of the speech situation, age, sex, education, etc. (Hernández-Chávez 1975, Labov 1966, Peñalosa 1980).

If one agrees that speech is primarily social behavior, and that it should not be limited to the production of grammatically correct sentences, then one can argue as Hymes does that:

"A child from whom any and all of the grammatical sentences of a language might come with equal likelihood would be of course a social monster. Within the social matrix in which it acquires a system of grammar, a child acquires also a system of its use, regarding persons, places, purposes, other models of communication, etc. -- all the components of communicative events, together with attitudes and beliefs regarding them. There also develop patterns of the sequential use of language in conversation, address, standard routines, and the like. In such acquisition resides the child's sociolinguistic competence (or, more broadly, communicative competence), its ability to participate in its society as not only a speaking, but also a communicating member. What children so acquire, an integrated theory of sociolinguistic description must be able to describe." (Hymes 1974:75)

The basic unit for the analysis of the interaction of language and social setting is the communicative event (Hymes 1974). The components of the communicative events which are involved in this paper include:

- (1) the various kinds of participants and their sociological attributes;
- (2) the mode of communication: either verbal or written;
- (3) the linguistic varieties shared by the participants;
- (4) the setting: home, neighborhood, classroom;
- (5) the intent or purpose held by the speakers;
- (6) the topic and comments;
- (7) the types of events: e.g., questions, commands, jokes.

Other studies done recently (not necessarily dealing with bilingual children) have not only examined language behavior in specific speech situations, but have also changed the unit of analysis from the sentence to speech acts and events. Current research projects dealing with discourse structure focus on various other systematic levels such as turns of speaking, conversations, moves, utterances, or exchanges. (Sinclair and

Coulthard 1975, Ervin-Tripp 1977). All these studies examine functional diversity in language, and indicate that there is not always a direct correspondence between linguistic functions and structural forms. Questions, for example, are difficult to code because some questions can be interpreted as requests for information, others are imbedded imperatives, while still others are simply rhetorical (Ervin-Tripp 1977). Thus, the function of an interrogative, declarative or imperative sentence may be served by different forms. There is then a lack of correspondence between form and function because any given speech act can include several grammatical structures, and any given grammatical structure can be used to perform several communicative acts (Coulthard 1977, Hymes 1971).

Dore (1978) states that form alone cannot determine pragmatic function, because the hearer's interpretation of the speaker's communicative intent is dependent on various factors that function independently of the grammar. The first step in the formalization of the analysis of the functional use of speech according to Labov is to distinguish "what is being said from what is being done" (Labov 1972:191). This type of analysis must relate a smaller number of sentences written within a grammatical framework to a much larger set of actions accomplished with words.

There are no language assessment instruments available at present that accurately test the ability to function adequately in the educational process. This functional ability, however, is supposedly required by the LAU decision which requires that non-English speaking children are provided with programs which will enhance their educational opportunity while they learn English as a second language.

De Avila and Duncan (1976) have examined 46 tests of language proficiency and dominance: 43 measured vocabulary range, 34 dealt with oral syntax

comprehension, but only 9 were aimed at measuring functional uses of language. This is in spite of the fact that tests of phonology and grammar are not accurate predictors of effective participation in the classroom or communicative competence as shown in previous studies by Savignon (1972), Tucker (1974) and Upshur and Palmer (1974). Functional language competence is defined as the underlying knowledge to make utterances in order to accomplish goals and to understand the utterances of others in terms of their goals (Shuy 1977).

Language proficiency cannot be described accurately unless it is assessed in communicative situations which occur naturally. This is needed in order to cover a wide range of communicative skills. This should involve the child's level of facility across different speech events -- for example conversations with peers and siblings, or formal interactions with teachers, and his/her performance within various speech functions such as requesting and giving information, commanding, persuading, or complaining (Hernández-Chavez 1978).

The specification of the context in which each or both languages are used is relevant because to say that children are dominant or more proficient in English or Spanish is insufficient. As Shuy points out, in order to begin to assess language abilities accurately one has to assess comparative language abilities in a broad number of contexts, specifying in detail where, under what circumstances, and to what extent each language is used, as well as the relationships among those contexts (Shuy 1977). Thus, is a bilingual child more dominant or more proficient in English at school? at the neighborhood playground? with her or his siblings? One has to consider, then, not only a quantitative dimension but a qualitative

dimension as well. A holistic approach to language examines language use in specific situations, with different interlocutors and for different purposes. Furthermore, language variability should be seen as an asset rather than as a liability. Traditionally, and especially in educational circles, bilingual children are considered highly proficient in a language when that language resembles the one used by a monolingual speaker. However, as Lavandera (1978) points out it is only in bilingually defined settings and situations when the bilingual's total verbal repertoire is fully used, that is, the speaker is able to activate all the varieties possessed by him or her, mix them, and thus take advantage of his or her whole communicative competence.

Traditionally, testing situations which are monolingually defined tend to reduce the speaker's linguistic repertoire, which results often in a situation in which the speaker appears to be a non-assertive person -- a characteristic interpreted negatively in a dominant society (Hymes 1974, Lavandera 1978, Phillips 1972).

If one holds the view that Hispanic bilinguals can express better the social meanings and communicate effectively only by using their total linguistic repertoire, then one must take into account the whole linguistic continuum, including code-switching behavior.

The studies that follow describe the communicative competence of children who are at different levels of proficiency in English and Spanish by focusing on questions. These data are also reviewed in order to show that test constructs which include communicative skills are better predictors of language proficiency levels than tests which measure only certain aspects of the child's linguistic competence.

2. METHODOLOGY

This paper examines a) the use of questions made by children at different levels of proficiency in Spanish and English and b) the congruency between the language constructs used to measure language proficiency and the natural language repertoire of children video-taped in the classroom.

The data for this paper were collected as part of a larger study of language proficiency in children which tries to define levels of proficiency from a communicative competence perspective and from children's actual production in different settings.

School Setting

The school these children attended is situated in a middle-size school district about 60 miles north of Chicago. The bilingual program was characterized as a self-contained integrated program. The children in the class were white, black and Latino English-speaking and a small group of Latino children with low English proficiency. The children attended the program for the full day. Two criteria were employed in order to select the children for the program: a) parents who demonstrated interest in their children's learning and/or maintaining another language besides English and b) third graders who showed low English proficiency and who needed special help in learning English and doing their school work in a second language.

Subject Selection

Originally, the investigators visited three bilingual classes from which the subjects would be chosen. After observations of each classroom in

terms of program structure, availability of children and teacher cooperation as well as physical environment, 19 children from 2 classrooms were selected as possible subjects for the study.

The purpose of the subject selection was to find children of Hispanic origin at each of six different levels of Spanish and English proficiencies:

1. High English Proficiency -- High Spanish Proficiency
2. High English Proficiency -- Low Spanish Proficiency
3. High English Proficiency -- No Spanish Proficiency
4. Low English Proficiency -- Low Spanish Proficiency
5. Low English Proficiency -- High Spanish Proficiency
6. No English Proficiency -- High Spanish Proficiency

The degrees of proficiency used are the ones described by De Avila (1975) in the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) and which have been approved by the Civil Rights Commission as correlating with the proficiency levels described in the LAU guidelines. These descriptions appear in the Appendix and apply to both Spanish and English.

To select the subjects, the language proficiency of the possible target children was determined by 4 different criteria: a) administration of the LAS in both Spanish and English, b) rating of proficiency levels (in both languages) by the researchers after interviewing each child, c) the teacher's perception of each child's language proficiency in both Spanish and English, d) the children's parents perception of their own child's proficiency level in Spanish and English. Proficiency levels were described according to the definitions stated by De Avila (1975). The list of possible target children was narrowed by choosing only children where at least three out of these four criteria were in agreement on the child's proficiency level. As much as possible the final subjects came from the same

classroom, same ethnic background and were of the same age and sex. Table 1 shows the breakdown by sex and ethnicity of the subjects.

Table 1
Subjects
Breakdown by Proficiency in Spanish
and English, Sex and Ethnicity

Subject #	Proficiency Description	Female	Male
1	High English - High Spanish	Mexican	
2	High English - Low Spanish	Mexican/Puerto Rican	
3	High English - No Spanish	Mexican/Puerto Rican	
4	Low English - Low Spanish		Mexican
5	Low English - High Spanish	Mexican	
6	No English - High Spanish		Puerto Rican

All of the subjects were between 8:6 and 9:6 years old and were attending third grade. Subjects (1) (2) and (3) have lived in the USA all their lives while all the others have immigrated to this country within the last six years (range from six months to five years). Before these subjects could be selected for the study, parents were requested to submit a written permission form allowing their children to be videotaped in different settings.

Home Background of Subjects

Subject 1:

Paula was born in California. She lives with her parents and older brother. Her mother reports oral and reading ability in English and Spanish. They usually speak more Spanish than English at home and prefer to listen to radio or to watch television in English. They live in an integrated white-Hispanic low SES neighborhood.

Subject 2:

Ana, who was born in Waukegan, Illinois lives in a low middle-class white neighborhood with her mother and a younger brother (age three). She speaks mainly English at home, though she practices Spanish when she visits her grandmother who lives in town.

Subject 3:

Carmen was born in Waukegan where she lives with her mother and stepfather. She has an older sister and a younger brother. She ~~has~~ spoken mainly English at home until her mother remarried someone who spoke only Spanish. The mother is interested in Carmen's participation in this bilingual class so that Carmen can learn and practice Spanish. They live in a low middle-class white neighborhood.

Subject 4:

José was born in Mexico. He came to the USA about five years ago. He has older siblings to whom he speaks mainly Spanish. His parents, who work full-time, report that they listen to the radio or watch television predominantly in Spanish. Their house, which they own, is situated in an integrated neighborhood.

Subject 5:

Juanita has been in the USA less than a year. She has younger siblings. The grandmother lives with them at home. The parents report that they speak only Spanish to their children. They live in a low SES neighborhood composed mainly of Hispanics and whites.

Subject 6:

César has been on the US mainland less than a year. He lives with his mother, who speaks only Spanish, and two older siblings who are learning English. The mother reports that she has no proficiency in English and that she has an elementary school educational background. At home they prefer to listen to radio or watch television in Spanish. The family lives in a low SES mixed Hispanic-Black neighborhood.

Subjects' Teacher

The teacher in the class chosen for the study is an Anglo female. She was born in South America to missionary parents. She has a good command of Spanish, and has taught elementary school for two years.

Though there was some structure in the classrooms on the whole, the classroom was run in a relaxed manner where the children could

interact not only with the teacher but with other children during the different activities. The class was conducted predominantly in English, though the teacher often tried to translate for the non-English speaking children, especially to give explanations and/or directions. The teacher taught Spanish to the whole class three times a week, so most children knew some Spanish, and the English speaking children were helpful to those learning English.

The teacher had a teacher aide helping her in the classroom. The aide was Puerto Rican, dominant in Spanish but with good command of English, though she spoke English with a strong accent. This teacher aide was in charge of the four children who had low English proficiency, she was to work with them especially in the areas of Spanish and English reading and language arts, as well as to assist them with worksheet assignments in different areas.

Data Collection

Before any videotaped data were collected, the researchers visited and observed the classroom, became familiar with the children and visited their homes. Field notes were collected at these times which will be discussed in a larger study report. Parents of the subjects as well as 25 people in the Hispanic community each from three different age groups (three generations) were interviewed in regard to their language use patterns and their attitudes toward language, school, etc.

Afterwards, each child was videotaped for one whole day of school. The target child wore a lapel microphone during the taping session. A wireless microphone was tried at first but problems with frequency interruption made it impossible to use for data collection purposes. A stationary camera

(Sony AVC 3250) was used for data collection. The camera was focussed on the target child and the children around her/him.

Subsequently, children were video-taped at home playing with other children and at a picnic where all six children interacted. This video-taping was done with a Sony AVC 3250 stationary camera. Several audio recorders were used to collect data in areas where the camera was not recording. Furthermore, the parents were audio-recorded during the interview in order to collect some parent language data which will be analyzed for the larger study.

Data Analysis

A transcription code system was developed to analyze the videotaped data. The information coded included the following:

- (1) Location of interaction or utterances (in the case of soliloquia)
- (2) Speaker: TC=target child, AC=another child, T=teacher, Exp=experimenter
- (3) Transcription (only conversations in which the target child was involved were transcribed)
- (4) Context (information relative to the lesson, activity, etc.)
- (5) Immediate situation (a brief description of what is happening between people involved in the interaction)
- (6) Translation (if in Spanish)

The transcription system was explained to several assistants who transcribed the tapes. An experimenter was available to clear up any ambiguity,

especially at the beginning of this data analysis. Subsequently, a different assistant checked the same tape to assure the reliability and validity of the information.

A system to code target children interactions was designed, with the same information from the transcripts. An interaction was defined as a series of conversational turns by two or more speakers around a common activity or topic which are temporally related. A listing of these interactions per child form the language repertoire for the study. For the present paper we are using only the school language repertoire.

This repertoire was quantified according to the number of utterances. Utterances are defined as units of speech (sentences, phrase, words) which express an idea and/or intent. Spanish and English utterances for each child have been counted. It is important to clarify that the number of total utterances is not a measure of language proficiency in Spanish and English. However, It is expected that a child who is more proficient in English will produce more utterances in English than Spanish and vice versa. In bilingual children though, the language used in interactions will depend on the situation, the context, the interlocutor, etc., involved in the interaction. Utterances, at times, may be just one word while others may be very complex sentences in form and/or function and, as such, they do not reflect the same degrees of proficiency. Table 2 shows the total count of utterances representing the collected language repertoire for each child which will be used in the study. As explained before, this is in no way a description or representation of the language proficiency of the subjects.

Table 2
Language Repertoire
Per Subject, Language and Setting

A. Per Subject and Language

Subject	Utterances			
	Total	% English	% Spanish	% Mix
Paula	874	64.5	33.5	1.7
Carmen	603	96.7	2.7	.6
Ana	536	94.5	5.4	--
Jose	393	18.4	80.4	1.2
Juanita	1143	13.0	84.7	2.3
Cesar	653	16.5	83.1	.4

B. Per Language, and Setting

Subject	English			Spanish		
	Total Utterances	% Home*	% School	Total Utterances	% Home	% School
Paula	676	50.1	49.9	187	93.5	6.4
Carmen	591	54.3	45.7	120	90	10.0
Ana	468	44.4	55.6	68	17.6	82.3**
Jose	103	44.7	55.3	284	70.8	29.2
Juanita	167	74.3	25.7	941	86.0	14.0
Cesar	99	76.8	23.2	527	72.7	27.3

NOTE: *Home language was collected mainly from play activities with siblings and/or friends.

**Ana's Spanish repertoire at school includes a 15 minute talk with one of the experimenters. The conversation was all in Spanish and most of Ana's utterances in Spanish were one word utterances (vocabulary items).

3. STUDY ONE: THE USE OF QUESTIONS BY EIGHT YEAR OLD HISPANICS

Rationale and Problem

This section of the paper addresses the issue of the way in which Hispanic children, who are at different levels of proficiency in English and Spanish ask questions in those languages of their peers during their interaction in the classroom, and the identification of the social variables that influence the types of questions the children used. We intend to see if there are any differences in the types of questions used by children who are more proficient in one or the other language when compared with children who are less proficient in the same language.

As Ervin-Tripp (1977) has stated, certain communicative acts are especially suitable for functional language analysis. Questions, for example, have a high frequency of occurrence, require responses by the addressee and the audience, and are used to communicate a variety of intentions.

There have been some studies dealing with the questioning strategies used by English monolingual children with ages similar to those included in this study (Ervin-Tripp 1977, Dore 1977, Peck 1978). However, most of the issues raised in those studies have dealt with children's discourse materials as compared to adult patterns. In our study we will be examining the repertoire of questions used by six children of Spanish-English speaking background who are at different levels of proficiency in both languages.

Data and Discussion

The data for this study come from the child-child and child-teacher interactions in the classroom which were extracted from the transcripts.

Interactions are defined as a series of conversational turns by two or more speakers around a common activity or topic, and are temporally related.

Two hundred and fifty six questions were asked by the six children. Table 3 lists the types and gives the code, the definition, and an example of each type of question. It can be noted from this table that the children's repertoire of questions goes beyond simple requests for information -- as questions are generally considered -- to requests for action, or imbedded imperatives, or rhetorical questions. The data were coded independently by two experienced coders to assure inter-rater reliability.

Table 3

Repertoire of Questions and Examples of
Communicative Intentions and Their Meaning

- Requests for Information solicit information about the identity, location, time or property of an object, event or situation; e.g., ¿En cual página vas tú?
- Requests for Clarification solicit more specific information when the child has failed to understand the referent of the previous utterance; a reason or explanation; e.g., Which one?
- Requests for Approval to request a judgement or an attitude about events or situations; e.g., Do you think this looks good?
- Requests for Action solicit the listener to perform, not to perform, or stop to perform an action; e.g., José, ¿préstame esta goma?
- Request for Permission solicit permission to perform an action; e.g., Miss Jones, can I finish this?
- Yes/No Questions solicit affirmation or negation of the propositional content of the addressor's utterance; e.g., Are we leaving now?
- Rhetorical Questions solicit a listener's acknowledgment to allow speaker to continue; e.g., ¿Tú sabes cuántas malas me saqué?
- Hesitation Questions answer a question with another question, showing hesitation and insecurity; e.g., Here living room?

We are not claiming here that this is the best taxonomy that can be used to describe the types of questions used by these students; however, based on available studies and on our observations, we feel that this is an adequate way to organize the data.

A quantitative analysis of the data (Tables 4 and 5) demonstrate that, in general, questions occur more often in the language in which the children are more proficient. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in the number of questions used by each child.

Table 4

Number and Percentage of Questions Asked Per Child

SPANISH

Level	5		5		5		3		1-2		1		Total Number of Questions Used by All Children.	
Child	Paula		Juanita		Cesar		José		Ana		Carmen			
	Total Use: 3		Total Use: 40		Total Use: 35		Total Use: 28		Total Use: 0		Total Use: 0			
Occurrences and Percent Req. Info.	Occ.	%	Occ.	%	Occ.	%	Occ.	%	Occ.	%	Occ.	%	Occ.	%
	3	100	23	57.5	17	48.6	10	35.8	--	--	--	--	53	50
Req. Clarif.	--	--	1	2.5	--	--	4	14.2	--	--	--	--	5	4.7
Req. Permits.	--	--	1	2.5	2	5.6	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	2.8
Req. Approv.	--	--	2	5.0	1	2.8	3	10.7	--	--	--	--	6	5.7
Yes/No Ques.	--	--	11	27.5	11	31.4	3	10.7	--	--	--	--	25	23.6
Req. Action	--	--	--	--	4	11.4	3	10.7	--	--	--	--	7	6.6
Rest. Ques.	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	3.6	--	--	--	--	1	1.0
Missl. Ques.	--	--	2	5.0	--	--	4	14.3	--	--	--	--	6	5.6
Total	3		40		35		28		--		--			

Table 5

Number and Percentage of Questions Asked Per Child

ENGLISH

Level	5		5		5		3		2		1		Total Number of Questions Used by All Children.	
Child	Paula		Ana		Carmen		Jose		Juanita		Cesar			
	Total Use 44		Total Use 51		Total Use 48		Total Use 5		Total Use 1		Total Use 1			
Occurrences and Percent	Occ.	%	Occ.	%	Occ.	%	Occ.	%	Occ.	%	Occ.	%	Occ.	%
Req. Info.	21	47.7	28	55	28	58.3	1	20	1	100	--	--	79	52.7
Req. Clarif.	1	2.2	10	19.6	5	10.4	--	--	--	--	--	--	16	10.7
Req. Permis.	1	2.2	--	--	8	16.7	--	--	--	--	1	100	10	6.6
Req. Approv.	1	2.2	2	3.9	1	2.1	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	2.7
Yes/No Ques.	6	13.6	8	15.7	4	8.3	--	--	--	--	--	--	18	12.0
Req. Action	3	6.8	2	3.9	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	3.3
Rest. Ques.	6	13.6	1	1.9	2	4.2	--	--	--	--	--	--	9	6.0
Missl. Ques	5	11.4	--	--	--	--	4	80	--	--	--	--	9	6.0
Total	44		51		48		5		1		1			

Requests for information were the types of questions that had the highest frequency of occurrence in English (52.7%) as well as in Spanish (50%), followed by yes/no questions (23.6% for Spanish and 12% for English).

Requests for permission and for clarification had a higher incidence of occurrence among children who were more proficient in English.

It needs to be pointed out that the reason some of the children asked questions of a certain type only in one of the two languages may be due to the classroom structure. The limited English proficiency (LEP) students in this sample were perhaps involuntarily isolated from the rest of the students most of the time, they were working in small group situations with the teacher aide, and the interaction tended to be in Spanish. Even when the groups were reading in English, the children asked the teacher aide questions in Spanish to which she also replied in Spanish.

At the same time, there is a tendency to group those students who are equally proficient in both languages with English monolingual students. This was the case with Paula, the most balanced bilingual of the group, who was always assigned to work the English monolinguals. It may be that her opportunities to maintain and improve her Spanish proficiency were curtailed while she continued to develop her proficiency in English.

We need to look at data in other, more natural settings, in order to determine the types of questions used more often by children who have low proficiency in one of the two languages.

Not all utterances were composed of full propositions. Many questions consist of only one word requests for clarification, such as "huh?"

which is a recurrent pattern in children with low proficiency. For example, this was observed with Ana when she tried to have a conversation with one of the researchers in Spanish.

Some of the questions were ambiguous. Yes/no questions seemed similar on certain occasion to requests for approval, and requests for information could also have been coded as imbedded imperatives. After looking at the context we found that the question was a request for action by the addressee, as in the following example:

César: ¿Tienes lápiz grande? (Waits for pencil.)
 Préstaselo a José.

Arturo: No sabía que eras su amigo tantito.

César: Tantico nomás. Préstaselo pa'cer el work y más na. (F1-2)

Rhetorical questions seem to be a more sophisticated level of language use. The majority of the rhetorical questions were in English and were used by students who had a high level of proficiency in that language, e.g.,

Paula: These are my pencils.

Mimi: One is mine.

Paula: That's ... How am I going to erase them?
 Mimi, could I have your eraser?

(E8-3)

It is obvious in the preceeding example that the addressor does not expect to get an answer to her question and thus, she continues with the next request for action. An interesting kind of discourse pattern occurs when questions are used to answer other questions when speakers do not want to commit themselves to a definite answer, e.g.,

T: How would you feel about this friend of yours telling your teacher?

Paula: Sad?

T: What would you want to do with that friend?

Paula: Beat him?

(E8-B)

These types of answers are particularly noticeable in the speech of Jose, a very low proficiency speaker in English, when he tries to communicate in that language, e.g.,

T: José, tell me where are these people going to sleep

José: Here ... living room?

T: Okay. No, in the bedroom.

(A2-1)

T: Where did you put your milk?

José: In here.

T: What's that?

José: The refrigerator?

(A2-2)

José's hesitation and insecurity in answering in English was increased by the attitude of the teacher who often ignored his questions continued to speak without paying attention to him. Furthermore, he did not seem to be accepted by the rest of his classmates who felt that his Spanish discourse relied too heavily on lexical items which they did not consider appropriate for classroom interactions. They would

regularly laugh at him when he made mistakes. This contributes to his feeling of insecurity and to his hesitating questions, e.g.,

T: But this here is a rug. It's on the

José: Rug? (Everybody laughs, José looks embarrassed.)

T: It's on the floor. The rug is on the floor.

Although Paula also used this pattern in her discourse once in a while, her answers marked by intonation did not produce the same derisive reaction as José's, because Paula was a leader in the class due to her high proficiency in both languages.

One can see then that the same types of questions are asked in both languages, although children who are more proficient in English seem to have access to a greater variety of questioning strategies. In addition, the type of setting or activity will influence the language in which the questions are asked and, consequently, in a bilingual class children have to be given an opportunity to work in different groups so that they are not involuntarily isolated from a richer language experience.

In our larger study with different contexts it may be possible to demonstrate that some types of questions could be specific to certain levels of proficiency in English or Spanish. If so, this could be the basis for a construct aimed at determining language proficiency. This construct would have to take into account the child's entire communicative competence rather than concentrating only on limited aspects of language competence (vocabulary, grammar), which are based on adults' expectations of children's linguistic performance.

The second section of this paper examines some examples in order to demonstrate (a) how a test which measures more than one aspect of language competence is a better predictor of the speaker's communicative competence than one which is limited to a single aspect of that competence, and (b) how tests currently used to measure language proficiency examine aspects of language use which are irrelevant to children's linguistic performance and do not take into account most of the richness of the children's language repertoire.

4. STUDY TWO: CONGRUENCY BETWEEN TEST CONSTRUCTS MEASURING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND CHILDREN'S COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Rationale and Problem

Tests of language proficiency widely used in bilingual programs vary in the type of constructs used to measure proficiency. Some tests measure vocabulary knowledge, others measure the use of certain grammatical forms varying in complexity, still other tests use a more complete construct, where function as well as form of language are taken into account to determine language proficiency.

In general, though, these test constructs are based on adult expectations of what children should be able to produce linguistically rather than on what children actually do. It is as though the dichotomy between what tests measure and what children do linguistically make the relationship between the content of tests and the child language repertoire non-congruent. As such, what tests measure becomes irrelevant or too narrow in scope to portray fully the actual richness of children's natural language repertoire. Thus, children are penalized for not producing what adults feel they should produce and, in turn, it is impossible to account for the real communicative competence of children.

This section of the paper will deal with (a) the issue of test constructs and their predictability of language proficiency levels, and (b) the issue of congruency between some of the language constructs widely used to measure language proficiency in children attending bilingual programs and the children's actual communicative competence.

To deal with these issues some qualitative analysis was done involving the language repertoire of the six children described earlier and the content of existing tests.

Interactions obtained in classroom settings and homes were analysed. We do not intend to make generalizations from the findings at this stage. The different levels of proficiency of the children in the study, though, were representative of children attending bilingual programs and, as such, their language behavior may be similar, in terms of their communicative repertoire per level. Finally, it is not the intent of the paper to make judgments about the tests used in the analysis.

The intent of the paper is to bring up examples of ways in which current test instruments and actual children's language are non-congruent, so as to specify the need for new constructs which are based on what children can do linguistically. As such, it is expected that most, if not all of the different aspects of communicative competence will be involved in the determination of language proficiency in bilingual children. Tests developed from this perspective should be more holistic in nature and take into account the richness in language use (form and function) found in children's natural language repertoires.

Language proficiency is a measure of communicative competence as defined by Hymes (1972) and subsequently by Halliday (1973), where form as well as function of language are taken into account. Several studies have tried to study whether grammatical or communicative competence constructs are best predictors of communicative competence.

Savignon (1978) studied the test performance of three different groups of students learning beginning French. Although the three groups received the same number of instructional hours, each group received an extra hour of activity which differed from group to group (communicative skills,

culture and language lab). End of course tests (one for grammatical competence, four for communicative competence) showed no significant difference in the grammatical competence test but the group that received the extra hour of communicative competence did significantly better than the other two groups. The findings showed that emphasis on basic communicative skills do not interfere with language development and that tests of communicative competence are better predictors of communicative competence than tests of grammatical competence.

Tucker (1974) did a study where he tested two groups of second language learners (one high and one low in grammatical skills) with a test of communicative competence and no significant difference in performance was found in the two groups. That is, the two groups could communicate equally well, in spite of their differences in scores in tests of grammatical competence. These findings again prove that grammatical competence based tests are not good predictors of communicative competence.

Upshur and Palmer (1974) studied linguistic accuracy of their students who had learned English through formal classroom training. They found that linguistic accuracy (as measured by grammar related tests) was not a good predictor of their measured communicative abilities.

These three studies show, in general, how communicative competence tests are better predictors of language proficiency than tests of grammatical competence.

In regard to more holistic perspectives in communicative competence testing, integrative views of communicative competence have shown the need to evaluate form and function of language when determining levels of proficiency in second language learners. Carroll (1978) has distinguished three levels of proficiency (basic, intermediate and advanced).

He defines levels in terms of ten evaluation criteria which can be applied to test scoring procedures in integrative test instruments. The criteria are: size, complexity, range, speed, flexibility, accuracy, appropriateness, independence, repetition and hesitation. Morrow (1977) has suggested that communicative tasks can serve as integrative tests of the learner's communicative competence. Morrow (1977) provides a list of criteria which could be used to evaluate this type of tests. They are comprehensibility, appropriateness, grammatical accuracy and naturalness of response.

The following section of the paper presents some data which may shed further light on the issue of predictability of communicative competence through grammatical vs communicative competence tests.

The issue of congruence between test constructs in language proficiency tests and children's language repertoire will be explored by comparing and describing examples which illustrate the relationship between what the test measures and what the children actually produce linguistically.

Test Constructs and Predictability of Language Proficiency Levels

Subjects for this study were selected when at least three out of four criteria used to determine their language proficiency showed the same proficiency levels. One of the criteria used was the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) results. This test is based on the premise that language consists of four primary subsystems: the phonemic system, the referential system, the syntactic system and the pragmatic system. The test construct, then, measures different aspects of these subsystems. The test includes five subtests described as phonemic, minimal sound pairs, lexical or vocabulary, and sentence comprehension and production (a story retelling subtest which measures pragmatic use of language).

For most of the six children chosen in the sample, the LAS results showed levels of proficiency which were the same as at least two of the other three criteria involved in the selection process, namely the proficiency levels as determined by the teachers, the investigators and the parents. Only in three cases was there a difference between the levels assigned by the other criteria and the LAS results. This difference occurred with the Spanish proficiency levels. An analysis by subtest was done to determine whether all subtests or some of them were better predictors of the proficiency levels. The LAS Manual and Technical report (De Avila 1975) does not explain the method used to determine the cut off points which delineate the different levels. The cut-off points are described in Table 6.

Table 6

Interpretation of LAS Scores in Terms of Levels

Score	Description	Level
85 to 100	Totally fluent in English (or Spanish)	5
75 to 84	Near fluent in English (or Spanish)	4
65 to 74	Limited English (or Spanish) speaker	3
55 to 64	Non-English (or Spanish) speaker, apparent linguistic deficiencies	2
54 and 60	Non-English (or Spanish) speaker, total linguistic deficiency	1

A per cent of right answers per subtest was determined for each subject. Table 7 (A and B) shows this information as well as the subtest proficiency levels using the same breakpoints as for the total score.

The data were reviewed to determine which subtests and how often the subtest scores differed by two or more proficiency levels from the total score. Subtest scores were defined as non-congruent with the total score when there was a difference of two or more levels of proficiency between the subtest and the total score.

Table 7
Per Cent of Responses According to Subtests

A - English Test

Subtest	Paula		Ana		Carmen		José		Juanita		Cesar	
	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level
I Phonemes	100	5	93	5	96	5	70	3	86	5	47	1
II Minimal Sound Pairs	100	5	100	5	95	5	90	5	90	5	47	1
III Lexicon	100	5	100	5	100	5	67	3	75	4	72	3
IV Oral Comprehension	100	5	90	5	90	5	70	3	40	1	60	3
V Pragmatic Use of Language*	--	4	--	5	--	5	--	2	--	2	--	1
Total LAS Score and Level	86	5	98	5	95	5	57	2	57	2	43	1

*For subtest V a level was assigned according to different factors (see De Avila 1975).

B - Spanish Test

Subtest	Paula		Ana		Carmen		José		Juanita		Cesar	
	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level
I Phonemes	86	5	80	4	86	5	73	3	93	5	37	1
II Minimal Sound Pairs	80	4	60	2	45	1	95	5	95	5	95	5
III Lexicon	100	5	94	5	92	5	100	5	97	5	34	5
IV Oral Comprehension	100	5	90	5	100	5	100	5	80	4	90	5
V Pragmatic Use of Language**	--	5	--	2	--	1	--	3	--	5	--	5
Total LAS Score and Level	95	5	61	2	50	1	86	4	96	5	90	5

**For subtest V a level was assigned according to coherence of content of the story, repeated syntactic errors, word combination, completeness of sentences, accuracy of story.

A review of the data in Table 7 shows that for the English test on six occasions the subtest provided a score (level) two or more levels removed from the level assigned by the total score. In this case, the levels shown in the subtest were usually higher than the levels assigned by the total score. This difference in levels appeared in three different subjects and only with the low English proficiency subjects (levels 1, 2 and 3) who were learning English as a second language. In general, it can be said that each one of the individual subtests was a good predictor of the total level of proficiency for English proficient children but it tended to vary some with low English proficiency children, especially the lexicon and minimum sound pairs. For that reason then, the whole LAS English test score is a better predictor of the language proficiency of the students. The story retelling subtest (pragmatic use of language) proved to be as good a predictor of English proficiency as the total score for all children.

In the Spanish form of the LAS, three of the five subtests (phonemic, lexical and oral comprehension) produced scores with two or more levels of difference from the total score. Students were overscored by the subtest while the total score showed much lower proficiency in Spanish. These subtests by themselves are not good predictors of language proficiency levels, especially in children who were not highly proficient in that language. Again, the only subtest which seemed to predict the levels of proficiency of the children tested as well as the total test score is the pragmatic use of language subtest, which measured communicative competence as determined by the construct used for scoring this section.

Since the LAS is one of the most widely used test of language proficiency in bilingual programs, it seems worthwhile to do a larger

study to determine if these differences between the total and subtest scores occur often enough to call for a review of some of the subtests.

Our data seem to go along with findings by Savignon (1972), Tucker (1974) and Upshur and Palmer (1977) which indicate that communicative competence tests are, in general, better predictors of language proficiency than grammatical competence-based instruments.

Since the previous studies were done with college students, these findings suggest that the same holds true for younger children who are learning a second language or who still have not attained full development in their first language.

Congruency Between Some Tests Widely Used to Determine Language Proficiency and the Actual Children Language Repertoire

While some tests used to measure the language proficiency of bilingual students are based on constructs where several aspects of language are measured (i.e. LAS), others measure language proficiency by looking at only one aspect of language (i.e. vocabulary or syntax).

The James Language Dominance test is based on a vocabulary (production and comprehension) construct. It is a test widely used in bilingual programs to determine the children's levels of language proficiency. Although the test is to be used with K through second grade children, school districts also use it at the higher elementary grades. The test has a form in Spanish and one in English; both have the same vocabulary items.

Each form of the test contains a section on production one on comprehension of vocabulary. The test was developed to evaluate the "language competence" (James 1974:10) of students in Spanish and in English. Although the manual states that the items are listed in order of difficulty (James 1974:11), there is no explanation of the criteria used for item selection.

Using the whole corpus of utterances which appears in the interaction repertoire of each subject in the language proficiency study, we checked to determine how many of the items which appeared in the James Language Dominance Test also appeared in the children's language repertoire collected during a whole day of school. This analysis may give us an idea as to whether the items in the test occur frequently in children's speech and whether the words are indeed organized in order of difficulty.

The analysis of the English production subtest shows that 9 items out of the 20 items appeared in the children's school language repertoire. Six items appeared in the repertoire of two of the three children who were proficient in English while none of these items were used by the other child. José, who was rated low in proficiency in Spanish and English, produced three items.

The items which appeared in the school repertoire were mostly those which were related to school (book, pencil, sitting, talking, eating, scissors and home). One interesting finding is that items listed in English as talking, eating, sitting, and drinking do not appear often as ing forms in the children's utterances but just as talk, eat, sit and drink. This form seems to be more common in the children's language repertoire.

In the case of the home repertoire 8 items appeared in the children's home repertoire. They mostly appeared in English proficient children. Some of the items were the same as they appeared in the school's repertoire (house, pencil, eating, talking, sitting). Thus, in reality only 3 new items appeared and with very low frequency (two times maximum). Only 12 of the 20 items appeared in the total data and the larger number of occurrences in the children who were proficient in English.

When we examined the English comprehension subtest, only four items appeared in the children's school repertoire (show, chair, swimming and dog). The ing form listed in the test did not appear when a child used swim. The child with the lowest English proficiency used dog and swim which are at the beginning and at the end of the test; a surprising finding if one assumes the items are ordered by difficulty level.

Six items appeared in the home repertoire data and two of them had occurred in the school repertoire (dog and swimming). In all, only 8 items

occurred in the overall children's repertoire out of the 20 which appear in this subtest.

Only four items in the Spanish production subtest occur at least once in the school repertoire of the six children. Again, casa (home) appears to be common, together with other items which could be related to school activities (tijeras, sentado, libro). Six items appeared in the home repertoire. They were used only by the two children who were highly proficient in Spanish. Four of these items did not appear in the school repertoire (plato, come, habla and lápiz). Thus, only eight items out of the 20 appeared in the children's total collected repertoire.

Four items from the Spanish comprehension subtest appeared in the repertoire (lumbre, zapato, duerme and nada). These items do not appear as listed in the test but modified according to ethnic differences or discourse preferences of children (fuego, tenis, dormí and nadar). Six items occurred in the home repertoire. Of these, five were new items (carro, cuchara, estufa, silla, llora). In all, only nine out of 20 items appeared in the total collected repertoire for the six children.

In conclusion, we found that only a very small part of the child's language repertoire, in terms of number of utterances, was taken into account in assessing the child's language proficiency via the vocabulary items in the test (range from 3.6% to 8.4% in English and from 0% to 4.2% in Spanish). From this perspective, the children may seem to be much less proficient than they would appear to be if the whole language repertoire was used in the assessment. We are not trying to imply that the children did not know the items in the test but they may not occur with high frequency in natural

language settings. Part of the problem is that tests are usually designed by adults, according to adult expectations of what children can do, rather than from observations of what children actually do do. The data, as analysed, show little congruence in terms of vocabulary used by children and what this test of vocabulary measures. In general, the test tells us very little about the vocabulary the children have mastered and almost nothing about their language proficiency.

Another test widely used in bilingual programs is the Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM) (Burt et al. 1975). This test measures language proficiency in terms of language development using a syntax construct. Syntax was chosen as a measure of proficiency because the authors thought that: 1) Vocabulary varies according to experience and bilingual children have very heterogenous backgrounds (socially and culturally) in terms of experience; 2) Pronunciation varies a great deal across dialects and idiolects, and accent is an indicator of other aspects such as SES, ethnicity, etc., than of language proficiency and 3) Functional use of language (communicative skills) is hard to produce systematically, efficiently and naturally in large numbers of children.

The test has a form in Spanish and one in English and the score is mainly based on the use of different grammar structures which appear in children at different stages of language development. The test uses the "structured conversation" (Burt et al. 1975:14) technique of eliciting natural speech. It was developed and normed with K through second grade students, although it is often used with older children in elementary schools. This test places children in five proficiency levels: Level 1 -- no proficiency, Level 2 -- some comprehension but not oral production

proficiency, Levels 3, 4 and 5 are determined in terms of particular groups of structures acquired hierarchically by children as they are at different levels in the language acquisition process. Cut-off points to define levels were determined by setting up points where at least 75% of the children had acquired a specific set of structures. Thus, a score of 95-100 indicates the child is at Levels 5 (Proficient), a score of 85-94 indicates Level 4 (Intermediate), and a score of 45-84 or lower corresponds to Levels I or II, depending on the degree of comprehension.

Table 8 lists the different structures that both the Spanish and the English tests measure:

Table 8
List of Structures Measured by Items in BSM

<u>Spanish Structure</u>	<u>English Structure</u>
1. Present Indicative	1. Short plural
2. Possessive, article	2. Plural copula
3. Adjective Gender	3. Singular Copula
4. Copula (estar), article	4. Article
5. Copula (estar), adjective gender	5. Progressive-ing, plural auxiliary, plural copula
6. Progressive (ando / iendo)	6. Article, plural copula
7. Copula (ser)	7. Singular auxiliary, singular copula, article
8. Past Subjunctive (Perfect)	8. Progressive-ing
9. Reflexive (se) indirect object pronoun, infinitive	9. Long plural
10. Reflexive (se) direct and indirect object pronouns	10. Perfect conditional
11. Reflexive (se), conjunction (que), present subjunctive	11. Possessive
12. Reflexive (se), article, direct and indirect object pronouns	12. Past irregular
13. Conjunctions (que), present subjunctive	

Each test (Spanish and English) has 18 items which measure individual structures or several of them which occur together as listed. The first eight structures are part of the proficiency repertoire of children at Levels 3 and 4 while the other five appear in Level 5 children (proficient in English).

With this data at hand, a check of each child's classroom interaction repertoire was carried out to determine how many of the structures listed actually appeared in their natural interactions.

Tables 9 and 11 show the list of structures measured and the total number of occurrences per child in English and in Spanish. The criteria for Level 3 performance is that the children produce six or less of the structures listed from items 1 through 8. Level 4 children are those who produce seven or more of the first eight listed structures (tested through ten items). Level 5 children are those who perform well in six out of the eight items which measure the use of structures 9 through 13 as listed in Tables 9 and 11.

Table 9

Structures Measured by Items in the BSM and Their
Occurrence in Children's Total Language Repertoire Collected

ENGLISH FORM

Structures \ Child	Proficiency Level 5		Proficiency Level 5		Proficiency Level 5		Proficiency Level 3		Proficiency Level 2		Proficiency Level 1	
	Paula		Ana		Carmen		José		Juanita		Cesar	
	Total Use: 148		Total Use: 95		Total Use: 127		Total Use: 19		Total Use: 19		Total Use: 26	
	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%
1. Short Plural	19	10.1	6	6.3	16	12.6	2	10.5	--	--	2	7.7
2. Plural Copula	13	6.9	--	--	7	5.5	1	5.2	--	--	--	--
3. Singular Copula	60	31.9	42	44.2	50	39.4	4	21.1	6	31.6	13	50
4. Article	12	6.4	19	20.0	12	9.4	2	10.5	3	15.8	--	--
5. Progressive-ing, plural auxiliary, plural copula	9	4.8	3	3.2	8	6.3	--	--	1	5.3	--	--
6. Article, plural copula	1	.5	1	1.1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
7. Singular auxiliary, singular copula and article	27	14.4	5	5.3	7	5.5	1	5.2	--	--	2	7.7
8. Progressive-ing	17	9.0	6	6.3	10	7.9	2	10.5	8	42.1	1	3.8
9. Long Plural	1	.5	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
10. Perfect Conditional	3	1.6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
11. Possessive	3	1.6	5	5.3	2	1.6	--	--	--	--	--	--
12. Past Irregular	23	12.2	24	25.3	35	11.8	7	36.8	1	5.3	8	30.8
Total Corpus of Utterances in English	676		458		591		103		147		119	
Percent of Utterances Using Tested Structures		27.8		20.7		21.5		18.4		12.9		21.8

The English test results show that a larger (in numbers) and more varied number of structures appeared in children proficient in English (Level 5 according to our criteria) while very few were used by children at proficiency levels 1, 2 and 3. The structures most often found in all students were the singular copula, the progressive and the past irregular. Of these, only the past irregular is among the five structures which determine Level 5 proficiency according to test performance. The long plural and the perfect conditional appeared infrequently in the balanced bilingual subject. They did not appear in the other two English proficient subjects in the sample.

The analysis of the total repertoire indicates that most of the structures appeared in the English proficient children. In general this test uses a very low percentage of the total language repertoire is used to determine the language proficiency of these children (from 12.9 to 27.8 per cent). If one accounts for only a small sample of the children's language repertoire then one is virtually ignoring a large sample of what children can do linguistically and is measuring only what adults feel is important in language proficiency.

Tables 10A and B show the occurrence of the different English structures at home and in school separately. These tables demonstrate that even the low English proficient children use more English at home than they do in school. This may be due to the more structured situation in the classroom and the fact that these LEP children are grouped together for instruction. Maybe if these children interacted more with English speakers the patterns will change. At home, the data were collected in situations which involved children playing with siblings and friends; in those situations it appeared that English was used more frequently in spite of the low proficiency of the subjects.

Table 10

A - Structures Measured by Items in the BSM and Their Occurrence in Children's School Language Repertoire
ENGLISH FORM

Structures \ Child	Proficiency Level 5 Paula Total Use: 91		Proficiency Level 5 Ana Total Use: 49		Proficiency Level 5 Carmen Total Use: 68		Proficiency Level 3 José Total Use: 8		Proficiency Level 2 Juanita Total Use: 12		Proficiency Level 1 Cesar Total Use: 28	
	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%
1. Short Plural	16	17.5	3	6.1	15	22.	2	25	--	--	2	25
2. Plural Copula	8	8.8	--	--	7	10.2	--	--	--	--	--	--
3. Singular Copula	25	27.4	16	32.6	21	31.9	1	12.2	2	16.7	4	50
4. Article	6	6.6	11	22.4	6	8.8	2	25	1	8.3	--	--
5. Progressive-ing, plural auxiliary, plural copula	1	1.1	2	4.1	5	7.3	--	--	--	--	--	--
6. Article, plural copula	1	1.1	1	2.0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
7. Singular auxiliary, singular copula and article	--	--	1	2.0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
8. Progressive-ing	15	16.5	6	12.2	9	13.2	2	25	8	66.7	1	12.5
9. Long Plural	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
10. Perfect Conditional	2	2.2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
11. Possessive	3	3.3	2	4.1	1	1.5	1	12.2	--	--	--	--
12. Past Irregular	14	15.4	7	14.2	4	5.9	--	--	1	8.3	1	12.5
Total Corpus of Utterances in English	337		250		270		57		23		43	
Percent of Utterances Using Tested Structures		27		19.6		25.2		14		54.2		16.6

B - Structures Measured by Items in the BSM and Their Occurrence in Children's Home Language Repertoire
ENGLISH FORM

Structures \ Child	Proficiency Level 5 Paula Total Use: 97		Proficiency Level 5 Ana Total Use: 62		Proficiency Level 5 Carmen Total Use: 59		Proficiency Level 3 José Total Use: 11		Proficiency Level 2 Juanita Total Use: 7		Proficiency Level 1 Cesar Total Use: 18	
	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%	# Occurrences	%
1. Short Plural	3	3.1	3	4.8	1	1.7	--	--	--	--	--	--
2. Plural Copula	5	5.2	--	--	--	--	1	9.1	--	--	--	--
3. Singular Copula	35	36.1	26	41.9	29	49.1	3	27.3	4	57.1	9	50.0
4. Article	6	6.2	8	12.9	6	10.2	--	--	2	28.6	--	--
5. Progressive-ing, plural auxiliary, plural copula	8	8.2	1	1.6	3	5.1	--	--	1	14.3	--	--
6. Article, plural copula	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
7. Singular auxiliary, singular copula and article	27	27.8	4	6.4	7	11.9	1	9.1	--	--	2	11.1
8. Progressive-ing	2	2.1	--	--	1	1.7	--	--	--	--	--	--
9. Long Plural	1	1.0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
10. Perfect Conditional	1	1.0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
11. Possessive	--	--	3	4.8	1	1.7	--	--	--	--	1	5.5
12. Past Irregular	9	9.3	17	27.4	11	18.6	6	54.5	--	--	7	38.9
Total Corpus of Home Utterances in English	339		208		321		46		124		76	
Percent of Utterances Using Tested Structures		28.6		22.1		18.3		23.9		5.6		23.7

When we examined the Spanish test data, we found that a large and more varied number of structures appear in the more Spanish-proficient children (Level 5). Only one structure copula (ser) appeared in all subjects. One structure (reflexive (se), indirect object pronoun, infinitive) did not appear in any of the subjects. It is interesting to note that the balanced bilingual subject, Paula, produced only two of the five structures required for Level 5 and each structure appeared only once.

In general, a very low percentage (from 2.2% to 15%) of the total number of the children's utterances were used in evaluating language proficiency by using the BSM syntax construct. In particular, the Spanish test used much less of the subjects total repertoire than did the English test. It seems again as if current test constructs are too narrow to cover the richness of repertoire in the children's natural language and, as such, these tests overlook a great deal of the children's linguistic abilities.

Table 11

Structures Measured by Items in the BSM and their
Occurrence in Children's Total Language Repertoire Collected
SPANISH FORM

Child Structures	Proficiency Level 5		Proficiency Level 1-2		Proficiency Level 1		Proficiency Level 3		Proficiency Level 5		Proficiency Level 5	
	Paula Total Use: 28		Ana Total Use: 4		Carmen Total Use: 2		José Total Use: 31		Juanita Total Use: 102		Cesar Total Use: 77	
	# Occur- rences	%	# Occur- rences	%	# Occur- rences	%	# Occur- rences	%	# Occur- rences	%	# Occur- rences	%
1. Present Indicative	--	--	--		--	--	1	3.2	2	2.0	6	7.8
2. Possessive, article	--	--	--		--		--	--	--	--	4	5.2
3. Adjective Gender	2	7.1	--		--		--	--	10	9.8	6	7.8
4. Copula (estar), article	8	28.6	--		--		3	9.7	13	12.7	5	6.5
5. Copula (estar), adject- ive gender	1	3.6	--		--				1	1.0	3	3.9
6. Progressive (ando/iendo) auxiliary (estar)	1	3.6	--		--		1	3.2	11	10.8	4	5.2
7. Copula (ser)	13	46.4	3	75	2	100	7	22.6	37	36.3	21	27.3
8. Past Subjunctive (Perfect)	1	3.6	--		--		4	12.9	--	--		
9. Reflexive (se), indirect object pronoun, infinitive	--	--	--		--		--	--	--	--	--	--
10. Reflexive (se), direct and indirect object pronouns	1	3.6	--		--		7	22.6	11	10.8	19	24.7
11. Reflexive (se), conjunc- tion (que), present subjunctive	--		--		--		1	3.2	2	2.0	3	3.9
12. Reflexive (se), article direct and indirect object pronouns	--		1	25	--		3	9.7	--	--	3	3.9
13. Conjunction (que), pre- sent subjunctive	1	3.6	--		--		4	12.9	15	14.7	3	3.9
Total Corpus of Total Utterances in Spanish	187		58		9		287		954		552	
Percent of Utterances Using Tested Structures		15.0		6.9		2.2		10.8		10.7		13.9

*Note: Conversation in Spanish with Experimenter mainly monosyllables.

Tables 12A and B show the analysis done with the school and home language repertoire's data separately. Paula, the balanced bilingual subject used much more Spanish at home than in school. This is due in part to the fact that she was grouped with English speakers in the classroom while at home she played with bilingual or monolingual Spanish speakers. Table 12B shows that a very low percentage of the home language repertoire was taken into account in determining language proficiency in Spanish through the BSM. This may be due to the fact that the Spanish used in the classroom was much less formal than the English used there.

In the case of the BSM most of the structures measured in the test appeared in the language repertoire of the children studied. More structures appeared in subjects who were more proficient in Spanish and/or English than in those less proficient in those languages. Nonetheless, the test seems to measure only what adults feel children should know to be proficient in a language and leave aside most of what children do in terms of communicative skills. This happens in spite of the fact that current research shows communicative skills to be better predictors of communicative competence and language proficiency than are grammar or vocabulary tests.

The main problem with current test constructs is that they are based on adult expectations of what children can do rather than on what they actually do linguistically. There is a need to find new test constructs for measuring language proficiency which are more holistic in nature and show a knowledge of or are based on what children do with language. These tests should approach the measurement of communicative competence from a wider perspective where form and function of language are involved and

Table 12

A - Structures Measured by Items in the BSM and their Occurrence in Children's School Language Repertoire
SPANISH FORM

Structures	Proficiency Level 5 Paula Total Use 7		Proficiency Level 1-2 Ana Total Use 3		Proficiency Level 1 Carmen Total Use 0		Proficiency Level 3 Jose Total Use 21		Proficiency Level 5 Juanita Total Use 42		Proficiency Level 5 Cesar Total Use 40	
	# Occurrences		# Occurrences		# Occurrences		# Occurrences		# Occurrences		# Occurrences	
1. Present Indicative	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	4.7	1	2.4	6	15
2. Possessive, article	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	5
3. Adjective Gender	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	9	21.4	2	7.5
4. Copula (estar), article	6	71.4	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
5. Copula (estar), adjective gender	1	14.3	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	2.4	2	5
6. Progressive (anda/iendo) auxiliary (estar)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	2.5
7. Copula (ser)	1	14.3	2	66.6	--	--	2	9.5	9	21.4	3	7.5
8. Past Subjunctive (Perfect)	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	19	--	--	--	--
9. Reflexive (se), indirect object pronoun, infinitive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
10. Reflexive (se), direct and indirect object pronouns	--	--	--	--	--	--	6	28.6	5	11.9	17	42.5
11. Reflexive (se), conjunction (que), present subjunctive	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	4.7	2	4.8	2	5
12. Reflexive (se), article direct and indirect object pronouns	--	--	1	33.4	--	--	3	14.3	--	--	2	5
13. Conjunction (que), present subjunctive	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	19.0	15	35.7	2	5
Total Corpus of Utterances in Spanish	12		56*		--		86		145		166	
Percent of Utterances Using Tested Structures		58.3		5.3		0		24.4		25.2		23.7

*Note: Conversation in Spanish with Experimenter mainly monosyllables.

B - Structures Measured by Items in the BSM and their Occurrence in Children's Home Language Repertoire
SPANISH FORM

Structures	Proficiency Level 5 Paula Total Use 21		Proficiency Level 1-2 Ana Total Use 1		Proficiency Level 1 Carmen Total Use 2		Proficiency Level 3 Jose Total Use 10		Proficiency Level 5 Juanita Total Use 60		Proficiency Level 5 Cesar Total Use 37	
	# Occurrences		# Occurrences		# Occurrences		# Occurrences		# Occurrences		# Occurrences	
1. Present Indicative	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1.7	--	--
2. Possessive, article	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	5.4
3. Adjective Gender	2	9.5	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	11.7	3	8.1
4. Copula (estar), article	3	14.3	--	--	--	--	3	30	13	21.70	5	13.5
5. Copula (estar), adjective gender	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	2.7
6. Progressive (anda/iendo) auxiliary (estar)	1	4.8	--	--	--	--	1	10	11	18.3	3	8.1
7. Copula (ser)	12	57.1	1	100	2	100	5	50	28	46.7	18	48.6
8. Past Subjunctive (Perfect)	1	4.8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
9. Reflexive (se), indirect object pronoun, infinitive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
10. Reflexive (se), direct and indirect object pronouns	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	10	6	10.0	2	5.4
11. Reflexive (se), conjunction (que), present subjunctive	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	2.7
12. Reflexive (se), article direct and indirect object pronouns	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	2.7
13. Conjunction (que), present subjunctive	1	4.8	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	2.7
Total Corpus of Home Utterances in Spanish	17*		12		9		201		169		363	
Percent of Utterances Using Tested Structures		32.0		8.3		2.2		5.0		8.0		11.5

*Note: Conversation in Spanish with Experimenter mainly monosyllables.

where natural language samples are the source of information about the language proficiency of each subject.

5. CONCLUSION

In the first section of this paper have shown that children who are at different levels of language proficiency possess a rich repertoire of interrogative forms which they use in their classroom interactions in order to communicate various messages, such as requests for information, requests for action, or requests for permission. Questions are most often employed in the language in which the child is more proficient, and the questions are often determined by the type of setting or activity in which the children participate.

It appears that when the whole language repertoire of children is analysed from an integrative perspective, a better description of the children's communicative competence is possible.

In the second section of the paper data was reviewed which demonstrates that multifaceted test constructs including communicative skills are better predictors of language proficiency levels than tests which measure only one aspect of communicative competence. The data also indicate that a sub-test testing communicative skills can be as good a predictor of language proficiency as the whole test

Up to now, most tests used to measure language proficiency in children use testing constructs based on adult expectations of what children should know linguistically rather than on what children can actually do. This may give rise to situations where the communicative competence of a child is under- or over-estimated since the test construct is irrelevant, incongruent or too narrow in scope to look at the richness in the child's

entire language repertoire. By looking for what we adults feel children should know, we have been disregarding children's actual performance.

New studies in child discourse across levels, such as the one discussed in this paper, may open new avenues toward testing constructs which are integrative and holistic, and which take into account form as well as functions of language. In these ways we may better understand the communicative competence of bilingual children. It is through these new constructs that we should be investigating children's capabilities, and we should look at the child's entire language repertoire as a measure of language proficiency, rather than pre-determining "appropriate" areas of expected language competence.

Along the same line, Savignon (1977), Tucker (1974) and Upshur and Palmer (1977) have shown that tests which measure communicative competence skills are better predictors of communicative competence than tests based on grammatical skills.

Our data show that tests which measure on aspect of language with specific items tend to limit the range of communicative competence which is characteristic of the subjects in determining their language proficiency. In many cases there may be incongruencies between the subject's production and the test construct which may deter any valid determination of an individual's language proficiency.

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APPENDIX

English Proficiency Levels -- Explanation

Proficiency Level I

The students in this group do not speak, understand, or write English, but some may know a few isolated words or expressions.

Proficiency Level II

This group includes children with little knowledge of English. The speakers in this category often have great difficulty in comprehending and speaking English. Consequently, attempts at elicitation often are met with silence, a repetition of the questions or gestures (pointing, nodding, etc.).

Proficiency Level III

Speakers in this group have difficulty comprehending many things in the English language. Elicitations of many types of constructions frequently will be met with silence or repetitions of what has been said. However, they are sufficiently in control of the language to communicate, using poorly formed syntactic constructions. Although these children may occasionally produce good phrases and simple sentences, they generally will fail to provide a noun with the proper preceding article, be unable to manage agreement between subject and verb because of the inability to make the appropriate correlations between person, number gender, and subject-object forms for pronouns, and will have difficulty distinguishing singular and plural forms of nouns. Difficulty with the auxiliary verb is most evident in this range. Omission of the verb, (especially forms of "be") is also characteristic of this group of speakers. These speakers have been exposed to the major sound system in English and to the basic syntactic structures. They are usually at the Pre-primer stage in literary ability.

Proficiency Level IV

Speakers in this group both comprehend and respond to English better than those in Level III. However, they often do not respond without the use of one of the prompting techniques. Although they tend to use a large number of poorly formed constructions, these deviant forms will alternate with their well-formed counterparts. Their language facility could be

described as being in a state of flux. Their reading ability is usually 1-2 years below that of English speaking students. Thus, while they will continue to make the same general kinds of "mistakes" as those in Level III, they will not be making them so frequently. If these students are excluded at this state of their language development it would doom them to "failure." Therefore, they will continue to receive bilingual classes to insure continued academic growth and reinforcement.

Proficiency Level V

This group includes competent English speakers. These speakers both comprehend and respond in English. They have internalized the rules for most well-formed constructions, and their syntactic lapses are relatively minor. These lapses are of the type that may persist into adult speech, marking them as slightly deviant by middle class standards. These speakers in many cases have been eliminated from bilingual or TESL classes, but require some other sort of supplementary language program. Examples of the kinds of syntactic lapses that occur among these speakers are mainly problems with the auxiliary verb and with the use of the negative. These students usually are reading close to or on grade level.